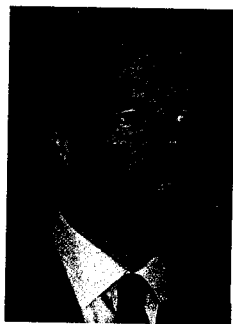




R. Nicholas Burns,
US Ambassador to NATO

HISTORY HAS GIVEN NATO A NEW CHALLENGE

At NATO's historic Prague Summit in November 2002, the Allies agreed on a blueprint to create a new NATO – different in mission, membership and capabilities than the old Cold War institution. The results of that ambitious and vital transformation effort will be evident at our Istanbul Summit in June 2004.



The most profound change is in our transformation from a defensive and static military alliance – with a huge, heavy army massed to deter a Soviet threat to Western Europe – to a more flexible, modern, and agile force focused on responding to threats from well beyond the European continent. NATO's past focused inward, on Cold War threats directed at the heart of Europe. NATO's future recognizes that challenges to global peace and the security of its members lie in the arc of instability that stretches from South and Central Asia to the Middle East and North Africa.

This epochal transformation has occurred concurrently with our Alliance's greatest enlargement since its founding in 1949. Seven nations joined NATO on March 29, extending our sphere of security across virtually two continents and helping to consolidate the democratic revolution in the former Warsaw Pact countries. The accession of these seven new members re-energizes the Alliance and reaffirms the importance our publics place on security as a pre-condition for progress and prosperity.

As we look to the future, the United States sees five goals for NATO. They constitute an ambitious agenda for our Alliance.

First, no international goal is more important than helping the Afghan people rebuild their shattered country. NATO, which has command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force, must reinforce its long-term peacekeeping role in Afghanistan. The Allies have agreed that we will move out of Kabul to build a nation-wide presence, and help the Afghan government to extend its authority and prepare for nationwide elections in September. Five new NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will be created to bring stability to important regional capitals. NATO's success

will depend on having the troops and military resources to do the job. The U.S. has over 15,000 troops in Afghanistan and has created nine PRTs on its own. We call on European nations to contribute more troops and resources in order to construct a more ambitious and effective NATO presence in the country.

Eventually, the U.S. hopes NATO will decide to take command of all PRTs in the country and ultimately take over responsibility for all military operations, including the U.S.-led coalition – as soon as security circumstances permit. Our second key goal is to examine how NATO might take on a collective military role in Iraq as President Bush has suggested. While the UN and other international aid agencies will provide the lion's share of economic and humanitarian assistance, NATO can offer something of inestimable value – security to give Iraqis the time and confidence to make this great transition from dictatorship to a better future. Defining such a mission will be a leading issue for NATO Heads of State to discuss at our Istanbul Summit in June. Third, NATO should expand its engagement with the Arab world and Israel to help those countries find their way toward a more peaceful future in the Greater Middle East. The U.S. wants NATO to be one of the building blocks for our long-term engagement in this vast region, and has suggested that we build on the progress made in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue by offering military training and exercises and a closer political relationship

to a broader group of Arab countries and Israel. Long-term change in the Middle East will help to attack the foundations of the terrorism crisis and give the growth of democracy and justice a chance to take root. It is a challenge Europeans and Americans alike must embrace.

NATO and the European Union are the two great institutions responsible for Europe's future, and our fourth goal is to improve relations between them. The spring 2004 enlargements of both organizations have advanced our common goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. NATO is considering concluding our peacekeeping mission in Bosnia as a success in December 2004, and supporting a new EU mission under the "Berlin Plus" framework agreed by the two organizations. But NATO should maintain a robust presence in Kosovo and a military headquarters in Sarajevo to help Bosnian authorities bring indicted war criminals to justice. Together, NATO and the EU must continue to support the transition to stable, market-oriented democracies in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia. For the U.S., NATO will remain the pre-eminent and indispensable security organization in Europe. Finally, our fifth goal is to elevate NATO's relations with Russia. Our constructive engagement through the NATO-Russia Council has helped make our citizenry safer and more secure today than at any time in the last 50 years. Yet there is much more NATO can do with Russia – from search and rescue at sea to theater missile defense to greater cooperation in the Black Sea to joint peacekeeping. We need to set our sights on an even broader relationship that will put our past rivalry behind us forever.

